I: Anonymous U-4 (no date) 1938 RB1 Baltic States RB1

A. HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

162 Until the twelfth century the marshes and forest-lands along the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea were left in the more or less undisturbed possession of a number of pagan tribes. The Esths and Livs[1] in the northern regions belonged to the Finnish branch of the Ural-Altaic family, while another group farther to the south, subdivided into Letts, Borussians, and Lithuanians, besides a number of other branches, was of Indo-European stock. The Borussians, who moved southward to what is now East Prussia, were early subdued and assimilated by the Germans, while the Letts tended to push northward into Livonia.

797 *The Teutonic Orders.* The first invaders of these regions were the ● 167 Danes, who conquered the northern half of Estonia in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. German merchants and missionaries had meanwhile penetrated into Livonia, where a bishopric was established at Riga in 1201. From then onwards the greater part of the areas now occupied by the States of Latvia and Estonia gradually fell under the dominion first of the Knights of the Sword, and then of the Order of Teutonic Knights, to whom, in 1346, the Danes sold their share of Estonia. These Orders colonized the territory, converted the inhabitants to Christianity, and made them their serfs. Their lineal descendants, the Baltic Barons, maintained their position as the land-owning class until recent times, in spite of the fact that the territory eventually passed into the hands of Sweden and Poland, and finally into those of Russia.

In Lithuania, on the other hand, the Teutonic Knights were never able to make much headway except in the Memel territory, of which the frontier was permanently fixed after the defeat of the Order at Tannenberg in 1410 by Vytautas—one of a succession of Lithuanian Grand Dukes who, in the course of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, built up a united and powerful State and helped to check the Tartar invasion of Europe.

548 *Poland and Sweden (1386–1709).* After the death of Vytautas in 1430, Lithuania rapidly fell into a position of dependence on Poland, with which country she had already been nominally connected under

197 162 [1] According to Prince P. A. Kropotkin the native language of the Livs was of Finnish origin, though they now speak a Lettish *patois*. (*See Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edition, vol. xvi, p. 817.) The Livs are now practically extinct, though there is a small community of them, some 1,500 strong, in modern Latvia.

186 668 weakening of the Russian control which resulted from Russia's defeat by Japan; the revolution which spread throughout the Empire in 1905 had its repercussions in the Baltic Provinces. In Latvia and Estonia there were peasant risings which developed into *jacqueries* of a peculiarly savage character; harvests were burnt, agricultural machines were destroyed, and considerable damage was done to the large German-Balt and ecclesiastical estates. In Latvia the rising was not only the work of the peasantry, but also of the Social-Democratic party and of a nationalist revolutionary movement known as the *Savieniba*. Petitions were addressed to the Russian Government for universal franchise, freedom of the press and of assembly, the right to teach Lettish in the schools, &c.; and a [665] Provisional Revolutionary Government was established in Riga. In Lithuania two congresses were summoned to meet simultaneously in Vilna on December 4. 1905; one, consisting of representatives of all the Lithuanian associations, elected Dr. Basanavicius as its president, and voted a resolution demanding the creation of an autonomous Lithuania within ethnographic limits. The other, a congress of the Peasant Union which had been founded by a certain Gabrys, decided not to pay any taxes, to dismiss Russian teachers and pro-Russian municipal authorities, and to establish Lithuanian courts.

661 The disturbances were finally suppressed with the utmost ruthlessness by Russian troops, with the assistance of the German Barons; 3,000 Letts were said to have been tried by court martial, about half their number being sentenced to death. The promises made by the Tsar in the stress of the emergency were not kept, or kept only in part, although each of the Provinces was allowed to send representatives to the Russian Duma which was now brought into existence. [167] Under the Stolypin Government severe measures of repression were introduced; many of the nationalist leaders, such as Karl Ulmanis in Latvia and Konstantin Paets in Estonia, were driven into exile, and a system of colonization was introduced with the object of encouraging a German 'non-native' class of small-holders which would [186] tend to support the *status quo*. None the less, in spite of the Russian Government's repressive policy, the national spirit which had failed to carry the day in 1905 survived, in one form or another, until the world upheaval in 1914 provided the occasion for a fresh outburst of activity.

II. THE WORLD WAR AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE INDEPENDENT STATES

726 Four factors contributed to the making of the new Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania during the World War: the fall of the Russian Empire; the German occupation of the border provinces

of Ambassadors on March 15, 1923. On the western frontier, Lithuania was more successful; the Allies had compelled Germany to cede the Memel area to them with a view to its later cession to Lithuania, but, while they were still negotiating on the subject, the Lithuanian Government took matters into its own hands, and on January 10, 1923, sent troops to occupy the area by force. This *fait accompli* was recognized by the Allies in the Memel Convention of 1924.[1]

One of the last acts of the Estonian Committee of Elders before the exchange of Bolshevik for German terrorization in 1918, had been the issue of a declaration that 'Estonia must immediately be declared a neutral country, and to this end international guarantees must be sought from foreign Powers'. They had followed this up by sending representatives abroad to secure support and recognition from the Allies, and the Latvian and Lithuanian National Assemblies had pursued the same policy. At that time the Allied Powers were glad enough to do what little they could in the way of moral encouragement of any organization which was in conflict with Bolshevism.[2] *De jure* recognition of the Baltic States was delayed, however, owing to the persistent hope entertained by the Allied Powers in general, and by President Wilson in particular—a hope encouraged by Kolchak and the Russian reactionaries—that the Bolshevik régime might yet be destroyed. The Powers would have liked, therefore, to preserve a territorially indivisible Russia which could ultimately be handed back intact in the event of some form of constitutional monarchy being established. But the treaties concluded between the Baltic States and Soviet Russia in 1920, and the disappearance of the last hopes of a successful intervention, paved the way at last for the acceptance of the new order as a permanent one. Great Britain and France granted *de jure* recognition to Estonia and Latvia on January 26, 1921; and, on September 22 of the same year, the three Baltic States were admitted as Members of the League of Nations, although Lithuania did not, owing to the Vilna controversy, receive *de jure* recognition from Great Britain and France until December 20, 1922.[3]

Constitutions Adopted. Meanwhile, the new Governments had been pushing forward with the work of reconstruction and constitution-drafting, in so far as circumstances permitted. In Estonia a Constituent Assembly was elected in April 1919; the Pacts Cabinet resigned, and was replaced by a new bourgeois coalition Government

[1] For an examination of the Memel question, see below, pp. 93–102.

[2] A limited and provisional *de facto* recognition was accorded to Estonia by France and Great Britain in March, and by Italy in May 1918; to Latvia by France in January, and by Great Britain in November 1918; and to Lithuania by Great Britain in September 1919.

[3] The U.S.A. delayed recognition of all three States until July 27, 1922.

The Estonian and Latvian Governments appear to have informed 648
Lithuania that they regarded the establishment of normal diplomatic 361
relations with Poland as highly desirable; while the French and British diplomatic representatives in both capitals used their influence to urge an amicable settlement. On March 19 the Lithuanian Government accepted without reserve all the Polish propositions, and received a reply on the 20th in which the Polish Government assured the new Lithuanian Legation in Warsaw 'all conditions of normal activity'.

Negotiations between the two countries were begun almost immediately, and proceeded so successfully that by the beginning of June three conventions had been concluded for the opening of postal and railway communications, and of river navigation, while further agreements relating to aerial communications and to a commercial treaty were under negotiation.

Although the Vilna dispute has reference to an area of inconsiderable economic importance, it has had far-reaching effects both on the domestic history of Lithuania and on the relations of the Baltic States with one another and with the Soviet Union. These have been described above, and it must suffice here to recall that the efforts to achieve Baltic solidarity, in relation first to Soviet Russia and later to Nazi Germany, have always been complicated by the enduring hostility between Lithuania and Poland.

2. Memel (Klaipeda)

Introductory. The Memel Territory, consisting of the port of 131
Memel and a strip of land about 70 miles long and from 10 to 20 miles broad, is bounded on the south by the East Prussian frontier and on the north-east by what used to be the pre-War Russo-German frontier but is now Lithuanian territory. It controls the right bank of the Niemen (Nemunas), a waterway of great importance for the floating of timber down to the Baltic from the hinterland, and embraces nearly three-quarters of the seaboard between the East Prussian and Latvian frontiers; without it, Lithuania would have no port on the Baltic Sea.

The city of Memel was founded in 1252 by the German Order of 361
the Sword, from whom it was taken over in 1328 by the Teutonic Order, as a centre for the conquest and conversion of the Borussians; on the dissolution of the Teutonic Order in the sixteenth century, the city and surrounding territory passed into the hands of the Hohenzollerns. By the fifteenth century the indigenous population [167] ●
had been virtually exterminated, but Lithuanian immigration was encouraged by the German rulers until the eighteenth century, when a policy of German colonization was first adopted. Even then the

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000 ripening fruits of tomorrow through the telescope of History—that is asking too much. There must be, after all, some standard one dare not destroy lest the fruits of tomorrow prove to be rotten. If I think thus it is because for the last two thousand years or more there have been not only brigands, conquistadors, and hangmen, but also people for whom evil was evil and had to be called evil. Mass slaughter, the terror of revolution, the craze for gold, the misery of the working classes: who knows what dimensions these flaws might reach if every man believed he must keep silent and accept? In rebelling, I believe I protect the fruits of tomorrow better than my friend who keeps silent. I assume the risk and I pay. If I were not willing to do so, I would now be writing an ode in praise of the Generalissimo. When one has some training in poetic technique, it is not particularly difficult to compose fine-sounding, rhythmical praise of *The Glorious Hero.*

101 131 197 The Baltic states—Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia—lie, as we know, on the edge of the great mainland of the continent. A gulf separates them from Finland; the Baltic Sea, from Sweden. Their inhabitants are not Slavic. The language of the Estonians is related to Finnish. The Lithuanian and Latvian tongues, which resemble each other, still constitute a linguistic riddle; no one knows the original home of these tribes who found their way to the lower reaches of the Niemen and Dvina rivers. We know only that the exterminated Prussians spoke a similar language. Of the three Baltic nations, only the Lithuanians succeeded in the past in creating and maintaining for a certain time a large state whose borders extended to the Dnieper.

[161] 197 These three sparsely settled countries underwent an intensive colonization, chiefly German and Polish, which marked the advance of Christianity. The result was

Narva on the Narva River between Lake Peipus and the Gulf of
361 Finland, is an old fortress city, with the forts of Ivangorod and Her-
BC mannstadt on opposite banks of the river. It is noted as a textile center,
361 the home of the Krengol'm (Kreenholm) cotton and linen mill, powered by a hydroelectric plant on the Narva River. The suburb of Ivangorod, on the right bank of the Narva, was placed into Leningrad Oblast of the Russian SFSR as the result of a boundary change in 1945.

Kaliningrad Oblast (Russian SFSR)

Capital, Kaliningrad; area, *c.* 6,100, population, 600,000

SU
631 Kaliningrad Oblast was organized in the northern part of East Prussia,
BC north of a line passing north of Goldap and Braniewo (German
631 *Braunsberg*), which was assigned by the Berlin Conference in 1945 to the USSR. The oblast lies on the Baltic Sea and is bordered in the east by the Lithuanian SSR along the Neman River and in the south by
SU Poland. The territory is level lowland rising slightly toward the south
133* and characterized by a humid climate, with mild winters and cool sum-
BC mers. It is drained by the Neman in the northeast and by the Pregel'
133 in the southeast. Along the coast it includes portions of the two lagoon-like inlets characteristic of this section of the Baltic Sea—Kurland Lagoon in the north and Vistula Lagoon in the south. Each lagoon is separated from the sea by a long, narrow sand bar (*Nehrung*), which leaves only a narrow passage at the northern end. Amber, peat, and
SU lignite are the chief mineral resources.
631 As in the case of other territories formerly held by an enemy nation
563 (Japanese part of Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands), no provision was
BC made to establish the northern part of East Prussia as an autonomous
631 area. Instead, the German population which was left at the time of the
563 Russian occupation, estimated at 100,000, was deprived of minority rights similar to those provided for other nationalities in the USSR. Only in the field of education did the Russian administration officially acknowledge the existence of a German minority by establishing a limited number of German schools. After a brief existence as a special okrug,
SU the area was organized as Königsberg Oblast in April, 1946, and re-
167 named Kaliningrad Oblast in July, 1946. Since a Russian majority is
BC mandatory in the population of the oblasts of the Russian SFSR, Rus-
167 sian immigration into the oblast was organized from the central European USSR, where a relatively high population density prevails in oblasts such as Smolensk, Bryansk, Pskov, Novgorod, Kostroma,

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Vladimir, Ul'yanovsk, and Penza. Settlers also came from the Belorussian SSR.

The region is mainly agricultural, with grain crops (rye, oats, barley, and wheat) in the lowlands, tobacco near the Neman River, sugar beets, potatoes, root vegetables, and leguminous crops. Forage grasses (mainly clover) support large dairy-cattle herds. Hogs and horses are extensively raised. Flour milling, distilling, and flax retting are the chief rural industries. Lumber milling plays an important role in the economy; there are paper and pulp mills at Kaliningrad, Sovetsk, Neman, and Znamensk (formerly Wehlau). Fisheries abound along the coast, with the chief ports and processing plants at Primorsk (formerly Fischhausen), Zelenogradsk (formerly Cranz), and Rybachiy (formerly Rossitten), on the Kurland Spit. One of the most characteristic products of the oblast is amber, which is secured mainly at Yantarnyy (formerly Palmnicken). There are machine construction plants at Bagrationovsk (formerly Preussisch-Eylau), Nesterov (formerly Stallupönen), Ozersk (formerly Darkehmen), and railroad-repair works at Zheleznodorozhnyy (formerly Gerdauen). Cement is milled at Polessk (formerly Labiau).

Kaliningrad (formerly Königsberg) was the former capital of East Prussia. Situated near the mouth of the Pregel' River, it is an important port and industrial center. It has shipyards and machinery works, and produces freight cars and drilling machinery. There are paper and pulp mills, locomotive repair works, and electric power installations. A deep-water channel connects Kaliningrad, through the Vistula Lagoon, with its outer port of Baltiysk (formerly Pillau), a naval base and fishing port.

Chernyakhovsk (formerly Insterburg) is a rail center and the head of navigation on the Pregel' River. It has chemical and metalworking industries and produces food products (sugar, meat, and flour) and beverages.

Gusev (formerly Gumbinnen), on the railroad east of Chernyakhovsk, has flour mills and manufactures agricultural implements.

Sovetsk (formerly Tilsit) is a lumber-milling center on the Neman River. It has paper and pulp mills, distilleries, and produces dairy products. Just east, on the Neman River, is the city of Neman (formerly Ragnit), with lumber and paper mills.

On the Baltic coast north of Kaliningrad are a number of important health and seaside resorts, including Svetlogorsk (formerly Rauschen) and Pionerskiy (formerly Neukuhren), to the east.

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Estonia and parts of Latvia to the Russian Empire, acted differently and left intact the internal order which he had found there. Peter and his successors, who enlarged Russia's Baltic domain, respected that order with all its shortcomings, especially the tyrannic rule exercised by a German Baltic upper class over Latvians and Estonians. This policy of non-interference was observed to the end of the nineteenth century, up to the reign of Czar Alexander III who curbed the influence of the German Baltic barons and embarked on a policy of Russification.

The Soviet régime faithfully copied the 'iron hand' method of Ivan the Terrible in all questions concerning the internal administration of the Baltic Provinces, but at the same time took over the imperialistic will of Peter the Great as far as the Baltic Sea was concerned. The men in the Kremlin, therefore, never considered the loss of the Baltic Provinces after the October Revolution as the last word of history. They always felt that the separation from Russia of the Baltic coastal areas ran contrary to the lessons of history and geography. Although recognizing the independence of the Baltic States *de jure* and concluding non-aggression treaties with them the Soviet ruling circles never accepted their independence *de facto*. No Russian communist was able to reconcile himself lightheartedly to the establishment of bourgeois régimes in the Baltic countries. The revolutionary movements of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania had been organically linked with Russian Bolshevism, and the failure of the Baltic communists to stay in power was thus an implicit failure of the Russian Soviet Government. It was bound to be avenged at an opportune moment.

THE BALTIC DIASPORA IN THE U.S.S.R.

In the inter-war period the Soviet leaders and even the Russian people could never lose sight of the Baltic problem since a large number of Latvians, Estonians and Lithuanians continued to live in their midst despite the existence of independent Baltic States. Latvians, Estonians and Lithuanians, the latter to a lesser extent, were 'peoples of the Soviet Union' long before the transformation of the Baltic countries into Soviet Republics.

It is true that there was no 'Little Latvia' or 'Little Estonia' in the form of a special territorial unit within the framework of the U.S.S.R. on the same lines as 'Little Rumania' – the Moldavian A.S.S.R. or 'Little Finland' – the Karelian A.S.S.R. None the less the tens of thousands of Latvians and Estonians who were scattered all over the Soviet Union fulfilled the same propaganda functions as those exercised in other cases by special Autonomous Republics.

The Baltic diaspora in the Soviet Union had various origins. There was first of all a strong Latvian and Estonian peasant immigration into

Ba. 167 S.U. 563 Russia proper. It started at the beginning of the nineteenth century when the population of entire villages left their homes after an unsuccessful revolt against the German Baltic barons. In the second half, and particularly in the last few years of the nineteenth century, a new wave of Latvian and Estonian peasant immigrants came to Russia proper, but in the twentieth century the Baltic immigration changed its character. The 1905 Revolution was particularly violent in Latvia and many revolutionary Latvian workers fled to Russia to escape the vengeance of the German landowners. In the years 1919–21, after the collapse of the first Soviet Latvia, about 60,000 to 70,000 Latvian communists and their sympathizers settled down in Soviet Russia. In the same period a number of Latvian and Estonian agricultural colonists left their Russian homes and went to the newly established Baltic 'bourgeois Republics', but the bulk of the colonists remained in Russia, even under the Soviet régime.

Ba. 167 361 The two main centres of Estonian and Latvian immigration in Russia were the Western border areas near the Estonian and Latvian state frontiers and Western Siberia. More than half of all the Estonians of the U.S.S.R. – 75,000 to be exact – lived in the Western part of that administrative area which originally formed the Leningrad Province, but which later was subdivided into the Provinces of Leningrad and Pskov. Many of the Estonians of the Leningrad Province who were organized into 123 collective farms and had 90 national schools at their disposal had settled down in the nearest vicinity of 'bourgeois Estonia'. Some inhabited villages on the left bank of Lake Peipus which separates Estonia from the U.S.S.R.[23] One of the Soviet border territories comprising an Estonian minority was given the name of the Estonian communist leader, Victor Kingisepp (1888–1922), who was executed by the Estonian 'counter-revolution'. The Kingisepp District was, however, no autonomous Estonian area.

The much smaller community of Latvian peasant colonists of the Leningrad Province had twenty-six National Collective Farms and twenty-one national schools.[24] The real strength of the Latvian ethnical group in the Soviet Union lay in the existence of strong and well-organized colonies in numerous Soviet cities such as Leningrad, Moscow, Kharkov, Dniepropetrovsk, Vitebsk and Smolensk. A 'Foreign Bureau of the Latvian Communist Party' co-ordinated the activities of these colonies and a cultural organization, 'Prometei', catered for their intellectual welfare. 'Prometei' was in charge of three Latvian theatres in Moscow, Smolensk and Leningrad. It had a publishing house of its own which printed communist propaganda literature as well as Latvian translations of Soviet authors and Russian classics.[25] The Soviet Latvians also had two daily newspapers, one published in Leningrad, the other in Novosibirsk and there existed special Latvian children's magazines, Komsomol publications and a Latvian library and art review.[26]

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magazines, Komsomol publications and a Latvian literary and art review.[36]

Individual Latvians and Estonians were serving the Soviet Union in different ways long before their respective countries were compelled to place at the disposal of the U.S.S.R. the whole of their economic assets, natural riches and manpower. Latvians and Estonians gave the Soviet régime not only industrious collective farmers and skilled workers, but also high ranking party and administrative officials, diplomats and G.P.U. agents. The influence exercised by the small Baltic minorities of the Soviet Union during the inter-war period becomes understandable if we bear in mind that they had the highest percentage of Communist Party members of all Soviet nationalities. Thus in 1927, 12,198 Latvians or 8·98 per cent of the entire Latvian minority were party members, while the 2,577 Lithuanian and the 3,682 Estonian communists accounted for 6·2 per cent and 2·38 per cent, respectively, of their national minorities in the U.S.S.R. The importance of these figures can be assessed more properly if we bear in mind that only 0·88 per cent of all Russians and 0·39 per cent of all Ukrainians were organized in the Communist Party at that time.[37]

The Latvian communists, who had played an outstanding part in the Civil War in the fighting for Petrograd, Moscow and Kazan, had earned the reputation of particular reliability. For a long time they enjoyed preferential treatment and were given many important key positions unattainable by other much more numerous nationalities of the Soviet Union. The most prominent Latvian in Soviet politics was Yan Ernestovich Rudzutak, member of the Politbureau of the All-Union Communist Party, Vice-Chairman of the Council of Peoples' Commissars from 1926 and in this capacity in supreme charge of Russian economic reconstruction. Rudzutak, who had survived several purges, was executed in 1937. Another influential Latvian was Robert Petrovich Eideman, President of the Osoaviakhim, the Soviet A.R.P. organization. He too was executed for treason together with Marshal Tukhachevsky. The nine judges passing the death sentence on Tukhachevsky, Eideman, etc., also included a Latvian, General Alksnis, organizer and commander of the Russian air force. Early in 1938 he was himself removed from office and jailed. The list of outstanding 'Soviet Latvians' of the period between the wars would be incomplete without the mentioning of Robert Indrikovich Eikhe. For over ten years he was the ruler of Western Siberia, at first as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Siberian Territory (Sibkray), and after 1929 as First Secretary of the West Siberian party organization. In 1935 he became an alternate member of the Bolshevik Politbureau. He also did not survive the big purge.

The Baltic refugees in the Soviet Union not only occupied important